Prince Edward Island
CANADA

Prince Edward Island
Student Drug Survey
2002

Highlights Report

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2002 PEI STUDENT DRUG SURVEY

HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

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The 2002 PEI Student Drug Survey is a collaborative initiative involving the PEI Department of Health and Social Services, the PEI Department of Education, and Dalhousie University.

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We gratefully acknowledge the enthusiasm and help of the Eastern, Western and French Language School Boards, and participating principals and teachers across Prince Edward Island. Most importantly, we thank the students who played a major role in ensuring the success of this project.

Overview

The *2002 PEI Student Drug Survey* is part of a coordinated Atlantic Canada initiative, using a standard protocol. This is the third wave of surveys in Atlantic Canada that are providing comparable information throughout the region. In general, the 2002 survey findings demonstrate stabilization of the rates of drug use found by the 1998 survey.

This report uses the anonymous responses of 2416 randomly sampled PEI students in grades 7, 9, 10, and 12 in May of 2002. **This report provides the best estimates currently available to describe the size of drug-use in the adolescent PEI student population.** All percentages in this report are likely to be under-estimated, since under-reporting is a larger problem for self-report surveys than over-reporting.

The drugs most commonly used by adolescent students in PEI are alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco.

- **Alcohol** is the drug of choice, with half of adolescent students reporting its use in the past year. This rate is stable when compared to 1998 and to the other Atlantic provinces. Drinking rates in PEI climb from 10% of Grade 7 students to 81% of Grade 12 students.

- **Cannabis** use in the past year was reported by about one in four students in PEI. This is similar to 1998, and lower than use in the other Atlantic provinces. Rates of use in PEI climb from 5% of Grade 7 students to 41% of Grade 12 students.

- Less than one in five students smoked **cigarettes** in the past year. Student smoking rates in PEI continue to decrease since 1998, and are lower than the other Atlantic provinces. Smoking rates climb from 4% of Grade 7 students to 29% of Grade 12 students. Across all grades 50% of smokers have tried to quit.

- Between 5% and 10% of PEI students reported using stimulants, magic mushrooms or inhalants. The remaining drugs are reported by less than 5% of PEI students.

- Patterns of **multiple drug use** for adolescent PEI students in 2002 demonstrate that alcohol use overlaps almost all other drug use. 54% of students report any drug use, and 46% of students did not use any drugs.

- Among students frequently using alcohol and/or drugs, the most common consequences is **unplanned sex**. The rates of sexual activity climb from 6% of Grade 7 students to 50% of Grade 12 students.

- 60% of students participated in any **gambling** in the past year. PEI participation decreased since 1998, as well as decreased gambling problems.

2002 PEI Rates of Drug Use by Gender and Grade Level

(% of students using drug at least once in past year)

Drug	PEI	Male	Female	7	9	10	12
Alcohol	49	49	48	10	39	63	81
Cannabis	24	27	21	5	20	30	41
Tobacco[1]	18	19	18	4	16	24	29
Stimulants[2]	10	11	9	7	10	13	12
Psilocybin/Mescaline (Magic Mushrooms)	7	9	4	3	6	9	9
Inhalants	6	7	6	9	7	6	3
LSD	4	5	3	2	4	5	4
Tranquilizers[2]	4	5	4	2	5	5	5
MDMA (Ecstacy)	4	5	3	3	4	4	5
Anabolic steroids	4	6	1	3	5	3	3
Cocaine	2	3	2	3	4	2	3
PCP	2	3	2	2	3	2	2
Heroin	2	2	2	2	3	2	1

[1] more than one cigarette
[2] non-medical use without a doctor's prescription

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SURVEY PROCEDURE

This report combines qualitative and quantitative methods **to describe the extent and patterns of drug use among PEI adolescent students**. The trend sections compare the 2002 PEI results to previous PEI student drug surveys (1998, 1996) and the 2002 Atlantic Provinces' surveys.

The survey uses a standardized scannable questionnaire, administered in three of the Atlantic provinces in May of 2002. The survey required random probability sampling methods, based on classes of students. In PEI, 125 classes were selected at rural and urban settings in the Eastern, Western and French Language School Boards and 2618 anonymous students in the public school system in grades 7, 9, 11 and 12 were surveyed.

Excluded by design are students attending private school, students who are home schooled, students absent from school on the day of the survey, and school drop outs. Dropouts and adolescents frequently absent from school are at higher risk of alcohol and other drug use than are adolescents in school. However, this survey does capture a wide spectrum of adolescent drug users (unlike enforcement data and treatment data). This survey does not attempt to identify who the problem users are, but does reflect current drug use and risk behaviours in the population of adolescent students in school.

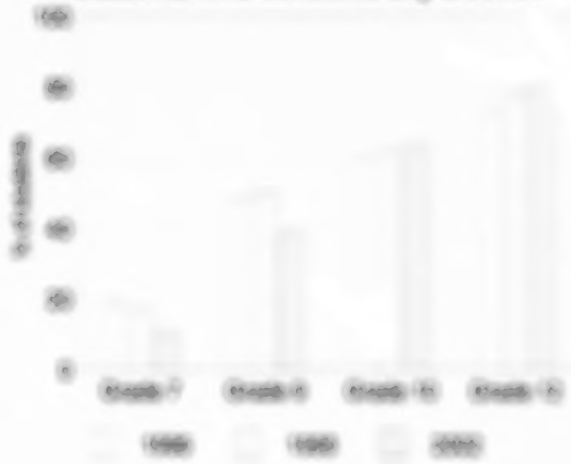
Questions at the end of the survey allowed students to express their opinions and concerns regarding alcohol and other drug use. Student comments, taken verbatim, have been added to the report based on their pertinence to the topic being addressed.

All drug use is defined as use (in any location) at least once in the year prior to the survey. This survey is based on self-reports. There is a potential for individual students to exaggerate or deny their drug use. One of the validity checks for over-reporting is elimination of students statistically defined as exaggerators. To under-reporting an anonymous setting was used. Overall, the estimates of drug use in this survey should be viewed as conservative.

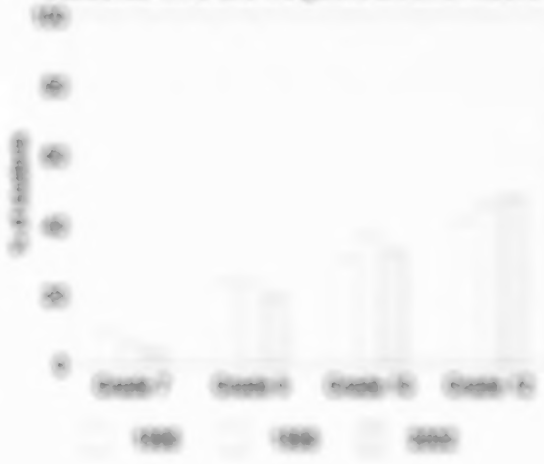
Past Year Drinking of ALCOHOL

	Drinking in 2002	Trends in Drinking
Total Sample	◉ Overall, 46% of students surveyed report drinking alcohol at least once during the 12 months past year before the survey. 28% of students are frequent users of alcohol.	◉ About half of students have reported alcohol use since 1998.
Gender	◉ Rates of drinking in 2002 are similar between males (45%) and females (46%).	◉ Male and female drinking rates were also similar in 1998 and 1998.
Grade/Age	◉ Drinking increases with age of student: Gr. 7: 10% Gr. 8: 38% Gr. 10: 63% Gr. 12: 81%.	◉ Rates of drinking in Grade 7 have decreased from 1998 to 2002. The biggest increase in alcohol use did occure between Grade 7 and Grade 8.

Students who consume any alcohol



Students who are frequent alcohol users



Alcohol consumption increases as students get older.

Frequent alcohol users:
- 100% drink more often than monthly.
- 73% had 5 or more drinks on the same occasion in the past month.
- 72% were drunk at least once in the past month.

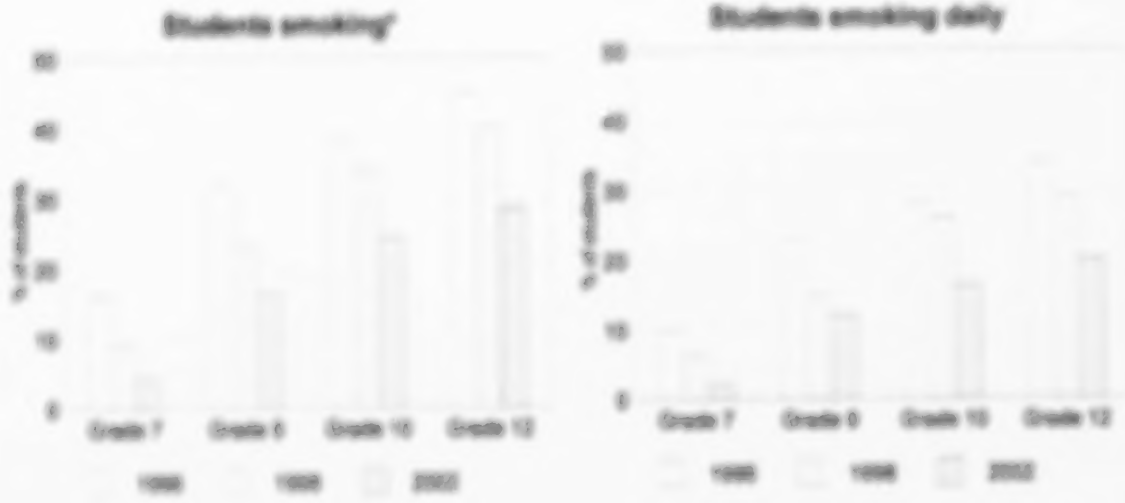
[illegible] – [illegible] of Friends

- [illegible] was the most common [illegible] that was alcohol.
- [illegible] of those of [illegible] [illegible] alcohol. [illegible] of [illegible] that [illegible] alcohol.
- [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] alcohol. [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] alcohol.

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

Past Year Smoking of CIGARETTES

	Smoking in 2002	Trends in Smoking
Total Sample	● Overall, 18% of students surveyed report smoking cigarettes more than once during the 12 months before the survey	● The overall smoking rate has decreased since 1996
Gender	● Smoking rates in 2002 are similar between males (19%) and females (18%)	● In 1996, more females were smoking than males. Since then, the gap has decreased to no difference in 2002
Grade/Age	● Smoking is related to grade level. Rates of smoking increase with age Gr 7 4% Gr 9 16% Gr 10 24% Gr 12 29%	● The overall decrease in smoking rates is seen at all grade levels



Cigarette smoking increases as students get older

* smoked more than 1 cigarette in the past year

Influence of friends:

- Students are more likely to smoke if their friends smoke, although the effect is not as large as with alcohol use.
- If half or more of their friends smoke, 70% of students also smoke.
- If none of their friends smoke, only 2% of students smoke.

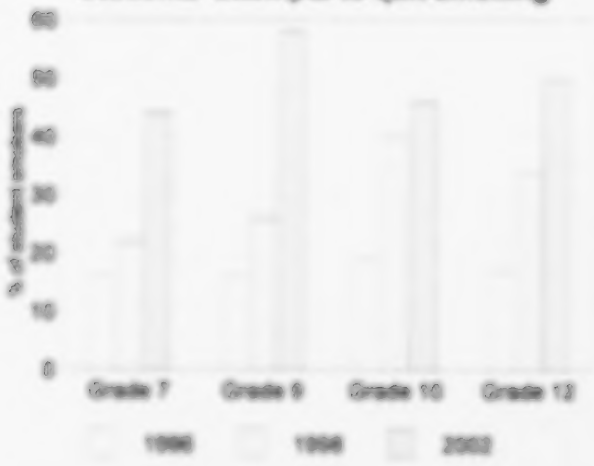
"I have only been provoked once by people to smoke, and I did once, but now I don't hang out with them anymore and I'm glad about that." Gr 7

"I smoke cigars about once a week but only when I'm drinking and I don't drink more then once a week, if that. I have never tried or wanted to try any other types of drugs." Gr 12

"You're not experiencing life fully if you haven't tried smoking or drinking. For me, it was an experience, but drugs are bad. Both my parents smoke, and now my 19 year old sister. It really bugs me to see them smoke, so i know i will never do it or even try it again. People that have addictions need help, it just shows they're having problems , or feel drugs and alcohol are the solution." Gr 10

- 50% of student smokers have tried to quit in the past 6 months.

Students' attempts to quit smoking



"I used to smoke and recently quit a month ago thanks to the help of a school program to educate me on results of smoking. Also 3 other friends of mine have quit with me." Gr 9

Past Year Use of CANNABIS

	Cannabis Use in 2002	Trends in Cannabis Use
Total Sample	■ Overall, 24% of students surveyed report using cannabis at least once during the 12 months before the survey. 7% of students are frequent users of cannabis.	■ Cannabis use has remained stable since 1996.
Gender	■ Cannabis use is higher among males (27%) than females (21%).	■ The gap between male and female cannabis use has decreased from 1996 to 1998, then increased to 2002.
Grade/Age	■ Cannabis use is related to grade level: Gr. 7: 5% Gr. 9: 20% Gr.10: 30% Gr.12: 41%	■ Cannabis use was similar in grades 7, 9, and 10 in 1998 and 2002, but increased among grade 12 students.

Influence of friends:

- Cannabis use is most common if friends also use cannabis. (The pattern is very similar to tobacco.)
- If half or more of their friends use cannabis, 74% of students also use cannabis.
- If none of their friends use cannabis, 2% of students use cannabis.

"I make my own choices. Any substance that I have used has strictly been my influence. You should always do everything once." Gr 12

"I don't have an adiction I just like to drink and smoke weed." Gr 9

"In relation to this survey, I think marijuana should be legalized. I find marijuana is less harmful to the body than alcohol. I think that making marijuana illegal is an infringement on people's rights to put whatever they like in their body. If marijuana is illegal, how come alcohol isn't? I would rather use marijuana than alcohol because I have more control over myself." Gr 12

"Although I use marijuana all the time and a lot more than most and have for almost four years, I have been on the honour role for all my life and do not belief, although the stereotypes, that marijuana has affected me mentally, physically besides my lungs, or intellectually." Gr 10

Past Year Use of STIMULANTS

	Stimulant Use 2002	Trends in Use
Total Sample	■ Overall, 10% of students surveyed report using stimulants at least once during the 12 months before the survey.	■ 2002 rates are higher than 1998 rates.
Gender	■ Stimulant use is similar for males (11%) and females (9%).	■ Male and female rates were also similar in 1998.
Grade/Age	■ The use of stimulants is similar to Grades 9 to 12: Gr. 7: 7% Gr. 9: 10% Gr.10: 13% Gr.12: 12%	■ Rates of use in 1998 also demonstrated similar rates for Grades 9 to 12.

In the course of a year:

- Non-medical use of stimulants was asked in one question in 1996 and 1998. In 2002, this was asked as two questions about amphetamine use and/or methylphenidate (Ritalin) use. The change in questions may explain the increase in use from 6-7% in 1996 and 1998 to 10% of students in 2002.
- Hallucinogens include cannabis, mescaline/psilocybin (magic mushrooms), LSD, and PCP (horse tranquillizer). Hallucinogen use in PEI (less than 10% of students) is similar to 1996 and 1998, but LSD use has declined.
- Less than 5% of PEI students report using tranquilizers, ecstacy, cocaine, anabolic steroids, PCP, or heroin. Proportions are generally similar in the Atlantic provinces.

"Alcohol and drugs are great to have sometimes to just relax with some friends. But it is stupid to do it all the time, it will just ruin your life." Gr 10

"I did acid at an "acid party" where 7 of my friends were on it to. It's a cheap high that last for hours and I think that's why people do it." Gr 12

"Most of the time I only do drugs or drink to get rid of problems." Gr 9

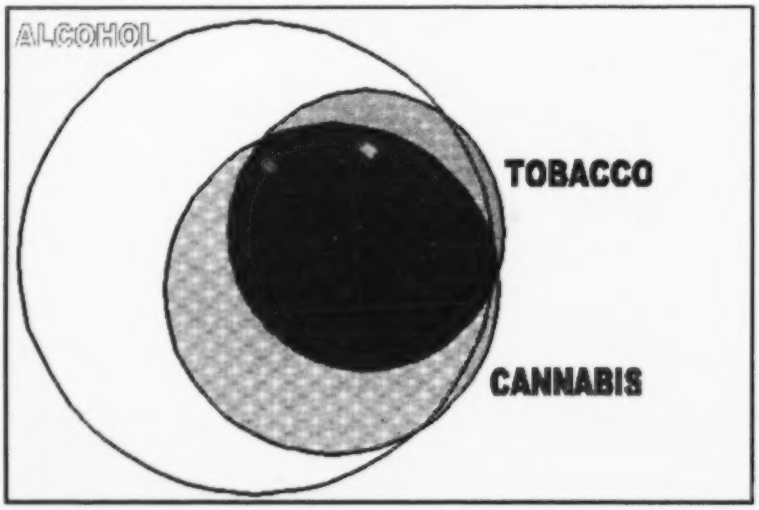
"Yes. I don't understand why people use drugs. And/or they get a hold of them in a snap of a finger! Theres people in my School that are high off drugs and the teachers have no clue at all!" Gr 9

MULTIPLE DRUG USE

Patterns of **multiple drug use** for adolescent PEI students in 2002:

- Alcohol use overlaps almost all other drug use.
- 12% of all students report multiple drug use of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis.

Various patterns of multiple drug use are shown as a Venn diagram with accurately scaled areas for the rectangle, circles and overlapping surfaces.



- The rectangle represents all students surveyed (100%).
- The circles represent the students reporting any use (54%).
- The remainder of the rectangle represents the students who did not use any drugs (46%).
- Students rarely report using tobacco, cannabis, or other drugs without drinking alcohol.

ATLANTIC PROVINCES COMPARISON

The 2002 Student Drug Use Survey was conducted in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Data collection did not take place in Newfoundland and Labrador in 2002.

2002 Drug use in the Maritime Provinces
(% of Grade 7, 9, 10, 12 students using drug at least once in past year)

	PEI	NS	NB
Alcohol	48	52	53
Cannabis	24	36	35
Tobacco (cigarettes)	18	23	21
Psilocybin/Mescaline (Magic Mushrooms)	6	12	12
Inhalants	6	5	5
Amphetamines*	6	9	11
Ritalin*	6	7	6
LSD	4	6	5
Tranquilizers*	4	5	5
MDMA (Ecstasy)	3	4	4
Cocaine	2	4	4
PCP	<2	3	4
Steroids	3	3	3
Heroin	<2	<2	<2

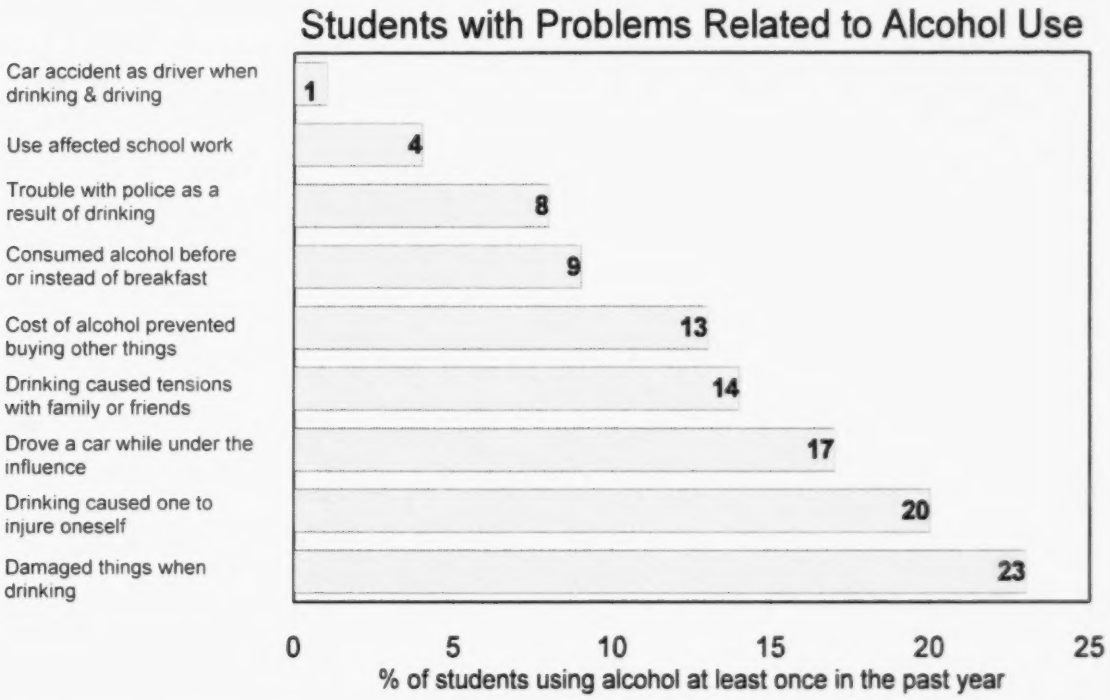
* non-medical use, without a prescription

- The drugs most commonly used by adolescent students in the three provinces were alcohol, cannabis and tobacco. In 2002, students in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick did not differ significantly in terms of the proportions who reported use of alcohol, cannabis, cigarettes and the other substances.
- The proportions of students who reported cigarette smoking decreased markedly in all three provinces since the last survey in 1998.
- Students in Prince Edward Island differed from their counterparts in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in that smaller proportions reported having used cannabis, psilocybin or mescaline, non-medical amphetamines, LSD and PCP.

CONSEQUENCES of ALCOHOL & DRUGS

In the course of a year:

- About 53% of students who consumed any alcohol have at least one alcohol-related problem.
- 27% of all students in Grades 7 to 12 have at least one alcohol-related problem.



In the course of a year:

- The two most common drug-related problems are unplanned sex and driving while under the influence.

"I have quit doing durgs. Due to the problems they have caused me in the past." Gr 9

"All add are against drinking and driving, and never smoking (pot) and driving. This is why it occurs so often people think its ok because they aren't told any different." Gr 12

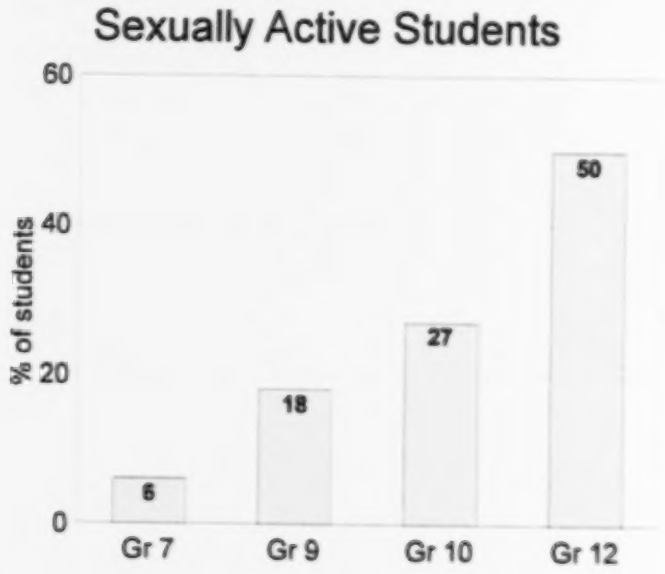
"I've been sXe (straightedge) for a year and a half and I know quitting all I used to do imporved my life...I hope you can get a good message across to teens because its worth it." Gr 10

"When I say I haven't bought things so I can drink, I mean I eat smaller lunches so I don't need to use my own money to drink." Gr 12

Alcohol, Drugs, and Sexual Behaviour

In the course of a year:

- Among students frequently using alcohol and/or drugs the most common consequence is **unplanned sex**.
- Sexual activity increases with grade level.
- Sexual activity rates are similar for males (26%) and females (24%).
- 61% of sexual active students report using a condom.
- 17% of sexually active students do not use condoms because they or their partner are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- The rates of sexual activity in 2002 are consistent with the rates reported in 1996 and 1998.



"I have never really had sexual intercourse but one night I was at a party and I got drunk and people say that me and one of my guy friends did stuff but didn't go all the way but I don't remember." Gr 7

"Just because we chose to have sexual intercourse does not mean we had sex because it asked if we used a condom." Gr 9

"I am sexual active but I am on birth control. I don't sleep around and I do get to know the person before I have sex with them." Gr 9

SCHOOL DRUG EDUCATION and POLICY

In Prince Edward Island, student drug education is the responsibility of the PEI Department of Education. Before 1990 no standardized drug education program was used. In between 1990 and 1993 the "Health and Family Life Curriculum" was implemented in Grades 4 to 9.

Students in Grades 7 and 9 receive mandatory drug education classes as part of the Health and Family Life curriculum; Grade 10 and 12 students have no mandatory drug education classes. They may take drug education classes as an elective. No standardized curriculum is used.

Students provided some comments on drug education:

> "I think there should be more help avalible for Drinking teens. I feel that they have lots for smokers or Drug users. and they make it seem like alcohol wouldn't harm you." Gr 10
>
> "I think that schools should have more education about drugs and alcohol because a lot of students don't realize a lot of stuff about that (especially drugs)." Gr 10
>
> "... I really think from Grade 10-12 is when you do alot of drugs, smoking, Alcohol, and they should talk to you then because that's when you are more likely to do the stuff and your more mature to talk about it. In Junior high you thought it was a joke." Gr 12
>
> "People aren't informed enough about what drugs and selling drugs can do to a person down the road. I've seen to many of my friends go bad, and it's too late to help them." Gr 12
>
> "Schools should have more classes to talk about behavior like Depression, and Life, things like that." Gr 12
>
> "Drugs and alcohol are too frequently used. It's scary and discouraging. School doesn't help, and this is where we spend most of our time. We need to be helped, not lectured. Too many are in trouble (addiction) now. We've done a couple of surveys with horrible results, but it's still ignored." Gr 10
>
> "I think Drugs are a pretty big issue for teens and should be discussed more in schools...I have used drugs and alochol but have realized its just stupid." Gr 10
>
> "We should be able to smoke, and I think the reason you can't help teens who are on drugs Is because they dont want to be helped. If they wanted help it wouldnt be from specialists It would be from someone their age." Gr 9

School policy for alcohol use is 'no alcohol on the premises'. School policy for smoking at the time of the 1998 survey was different for Senior High Schools (smoking in designated areas only) than for Intermediate / Junior High Schools (no smoking on school property). For September 1999, the Western School Board established a 'no smoking on school property' policy for all schools. The same policy was established by the Eastern School Board on May 10, 2000.

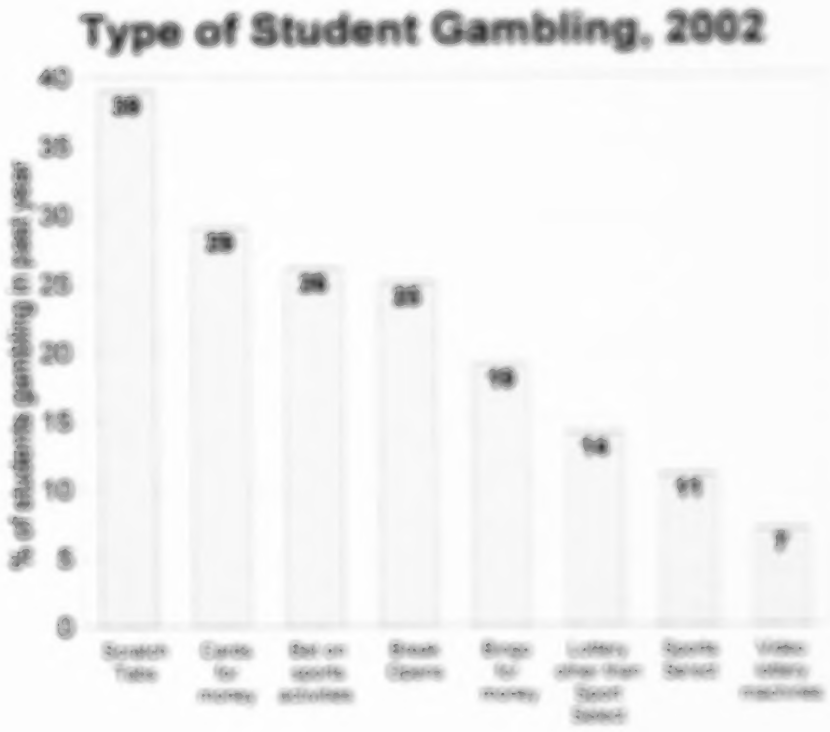
Student comments suggest that some schools are still faced with difficulties in enforcing the smoking policy.

> "Our school allows smokers to smoke in a certain area on school property. I disagree. People should not be able to smoke at school at all!" Gr 7
>
> "The school has a rule about Tobacco but they dont enforce it. People smoke 10-20 feet outside the school and dont get caught because no one is trying to catch them." Gr 10
>
> "Lots of people smoke around school and try to get people to buy smokes drugs when they are high. Our school has about 4 'smoke holes' and there is usually alot of people at them." Gr 7
>
> "There is a "smoke hole" that all the teachers know about but nothing is done to stop these kids from smoking, under age. There should be a law on smoking using drugs not just buying them." Gr 9

GAMBLING

38% of students participated in any gambling activity in the past year. This is a decrease from the 70% that reported gambling in 1998.

- Similar rates of gambling were reported for all grades.
- Male gambling rates (64%) are higher than females rates(33%).
- The majority of students (96%) are not considered problem gamblers. This is an increase from the 87% reported for 1998.



"For the stuff on the gambling I'm in a pool for Nascar Races with a whole bunch of other people but it does not give us problems it is fun." Gr 7

"Despite the fact that I will turn 18 in a week, thus being legally allowed to gamble. I believe that the gambling age should be lowered to 16." Gr 12

"About once a month or less I play break-open tickets but my mom or dad buys them for me." Gr 7

PEI RECOMMENDATIONS, 2002

RECOMMENDATION 1

It is essential to continue to support students to make healthy decisions about drug use.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Collaboration needs to continue to address the complex issues surrounding student drug use. These partnerships should include youth, parents, schools, school boards, health regions and boards, community policing, other community groups, the PEI Departments of Education and Health and Social Services.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Repeat the standardized survey in the Atlantic Provinces on a 3 to 5 year cycle to monitor regional and provincial trends in drug use. Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick should continue to enhance the level of interprovincial cooperation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

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This Highlights Report is based on *[illegible]*. A copy of the Technical Report can be obtained by contacting:

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For more information in the Atlantic Provinces, contact:

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Email: [illegible]

Contact numbers for adolescent addictions programs:

Queen's Region	[illegible]
West Prince	[illegible]
East Prince	[illegible]
Kings	[illegible]
Souris	[illegible]